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Letter dated 16 June 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In a move full of irony and by misappropriating the names of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), some countries hostile to Eritrea, for crimes that it had not committed against Somalia, have been trying to use the Somali fig leaf to persuade the United Nations Security Council to impose sanctions on Eritrea.

Eritrea's position on the manoeuvring that has been going on in New York is the following:

1. Eritrea confidently reaffirms that it is not sending arms and/or ammunition to any party in Somalia. It categorically rejects the baseless and fabricated charges directed against it. In fact, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Somalia, Mr. Ahmed Ould-Abdella, has admitted to the United Nations press that despite "much talk" there was no proof of the charges against my country.

2. Contrary to the fabricated and diversionary accusations levelled against Eritrea, there is irrefutable proof that a certain country in the region, in open violation of the United Nations arms embargo, is training and arming the Islamist armed group, the Ahli Asunna and Jami'a, various clan militias and an assortment of warlords, including Barrehilale. This is in addition to its continued military intervention inside sovereign Somali territory, which continues to complicate the search for a durable peace settlement.

3. Despite the fact that the United Nations arms embargo has been violated by a number of countries as reported by the United Nations Sanctions Committee and various mass media outlets, blaming Eritrea, which has not violated the United Nations arms embargo, is unfortunate. In this respect, if the United Nations Security Council is going to impose sanctions, it must do so on the basis of unassailable proof against those countries that perpetrated an illegal military invasion of Somalia and who provided arms to Somalis in violation of the United Nations arms embargo.

4. There is no doubt that the main objective of Eritrea and the international community is to bring peace, stability and unity in Somalia, although they differ on the way forward. Regrettably, Eritrea has been criticized for not falling in line with the "international consensus" on the way forward in Somalia. However, in the past two and a half years, the Eritrean position on Somalia has proven to be more realistic and correct. Eritrea was correct in its assessment that Abdullahi Yousuf and

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Nur Adde governments, despite the "international recognition and legitimacy" conferred on them, could not bring peace and stability. It is Eritrea's considered assessment that the same could be true of the current situation in Somalia.

5. Eritrea strongly believes that if the objective is the establishment of a broadly representative government paving the way for a durable settlement, then there is a need for certain actors in the region to refrain from trying to impose certain candidates of their choice, irrespective of the qualities they see in them. This has been tried at least 15 times in the past 18 years and has failed every time. Furthermore, what is required, and what Eritrea advocates is a Somali-owned inclusive process of a reconciliation conference that would ensure the participation of all stakeholders and address the issues of all Somalis in order to achieve peace and stability in the country and in the region.

6. Most importantly, Eritrea would like to underline that it does not have any hidden agenda or interest whatsoever in creating instability in Somalia. Moreover, Eritrea has never considered Somalia a threat. The Eritrean independent opinion is simple and clear and its objective is a peaceful, stable and united Somalia, as many members of the international community would want to see.

7. For over more than six decades, Ethiopia has sought to destabilize Somalia, fought three wars against it and continued to intervene to thwart the emergence of a united government with popular legitimacy. It is farcical that the country that harbours ill will towards Somalia and its people seeks to use Somalis to fight its war against Eritrea. It is regrettable that Ethiopia, which should have been sanctioned, under Chapter 7 of the Charter of the United Nations, for continuing to illegally occupy Eritrean sovereign territories, has the temerity to pour scorn on the Security Council, by demanding sanctions on Eritrea.

It would, therefore, be a travesty of justice if members of the Security Council were to condemn a country that has not violated the United Nations arms embargo on Somalia and to reward Ethiopia, which should be brought to the dock for its invasion and violation of the arms embargo and its obligations under international law.

I would be most grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Araya **Desta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative